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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5380
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 4134
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2536
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1648
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1068
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2225
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 6354
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4543
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2564
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000793

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - AUGUST 20

Lead Story

1. An Ipsos survey shows a technical tie between Concertacion candidate Eduardo Frei and independent Marco Enriquez-Ominami in a presidential race against Sebastian Pinera. The results were 22.9 for Frei, 20.6 for Enriquez-Ominami, and 35.6 for Pinera, (Independent, conservative, La Tercera, 8/20).

U.S.-Colombia

2. In a press roundtable with Chilean journalists on U.S. relations with the region, Ambassador Paul Simons talked about the U.S.-Colombia military agreement, the crisis in Honduras, and bilateral relations with Chile. Reiterating Secretary Clinton's remarks, the ambassador underscored that the U.S.-Colombia military agreement does not involve the creation of U.S. military bases and that all exercises must have Colombia's authorization. He said there would not be an increase in the U.S. contingent in Colombia. "We have limits established by law and we are under that number," said Simons. He added that the agreement "is an example of our ongoing policy toward Colombia. There is nothing new here. We have worked with Colombia over the past three administrations" in its fight against narcotics trafficking. Asked about Honduras, Ambassador Simons said the USG supports President Oscar Arias' efforts and that President Obama has been clear "in his support for the restoration of democratic order and institutions (and) with the return of President Zelaya to finish his term." With regard to Chile, Simons expressed satisfaction with the state of the bilateral relation, saying they have never been as good as they are today (Conservative afternoon daily La Segunda, 8/19).

3. In a press roundtable, U.S. Ambassador Paul Simons said: "Relations between Chile and the United States are the best ever. In the six months of the Obama administration, contacts have been important and in-depth and in each one we have asked Chile for advise on how to work successfully with the region" (Quote highlighted by La Tercera, 8/20).

4. Over the past days, the United States has made effort to explain its military agreement with Colombia. As part of that strategy, U.S. Ambassador Paul Simons said the number of soldiers and contractors that the United States can have in Colombia is limited by law to 1,400, noting that today there is only a total of 560. "We have been lowering the number of U.S. personnel in Colombia. We hope this (trend) will continue with the agreement," said Simons (Government-owned, La Nacion, 8/20).

¶5. Colombian Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez will meet with his Chilean counterpart Mariano Fernandez and President Bachelet in Santiago next Monday to discuss the strong division in the region triggered by the announcement of the U.S.-Colombia agreement. Four days later Bachelet will travel to Argentina for the meeting convoked by UNASUR to find "a solution to the tension produced in the bloc" over this issue. "I believe we will find more constructive paths and will be able to produce a more relaxed environment in the region" said Minister Fernandez about the upcoming UNASUR meeting in Argentina (El Mercurio, 8/20).

IPR

¶6. Well known rock brand "Metallica" has just won an intellectual property case in Chile against a local company that had registered the band's name to sell clothing (El Mercurio, 8/20).

SIMONS